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ABSTRACT

A 1977 project to acquaint secondary school teachers, administrators, specialists, and parent groups to innovative social science programs and textbooks is described. Project staff consisted of education and social science professors and an experienced teacher. Divided into small groups, participants were encouraged to sample, study, and critically review a variety of economics, political science, anthropology, psychology, and sociology materials. Sessions, held bi-weekly for a year, consisted of a brief description of a selected program, a demonstration using a lesson selected from the curriculum, and a question-answer session. In addition, three full-day conferences focused on issues of concern in specific disciplines. At a followup conference, participants evaluated the project and reported on their use of the curricula. General satisfaction with the content and methods of the project and dissatisfaction with the brief time allotted to each of the social science programs were reported. A large proportion, 35 out of 45, stated that they had experimented with 1 or more of the curricula. Data from three visits to each teacher indicated a high degree of student-teacher interaction, classrooms open to student ideas, and a considerable quantity of class discussion. (KC)

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Final Report

on

A Queens College Program for secondary school personnel

June 30, 1979

sponsored by the National Science Foundation

by

Jack Zevin, Project Director
and Professor of
Social Science Education
Queens College
City University of New York

SO 014 634

The "Social Sciences for the Social Studies" program was designed primarily to give local secondary educators an overview of innovative curricula suitable for integration into their junior and senior high school courses. Thirty-five area leaders and key teachers in teams of three and up were to have been enrolled since the project sought to extend its influence through such change agents rather than aim at large groups of classroom teachers. Acceptance into the program was ensured if the applicants formed a team from the same school including one or more board members, P.T.A. leader, administrators (such as chairperson or principal), senior teachers, or curriculum advisors. Due to intense pressure for places (140 applications) on the project after its announcement in the Fall of 1978, forty-five rather than thirty-five people were accepted including the following categories:

Administrators (Social Studies chairpersons & principals)	=	6
P.T.A. leaders	=	2
School Board Members	=	4
Key Teachers	=	25
Curriculum specialists	=	3
Others	=	5
Participants in Teams	=	38
Non-Team Members	=	7

Two school districts sent complete teams consisting of teachers, chairpersons, board members and P.T.A. representatives. In general, both teams and individuals had backgrounds with considerable teaching or school participation and well-developed teaching styles and orientations toward classrooms. The median teaching experience level was eleven years and the average age of the participating group was 37 years. Slightly less than one-third of the group taught or worked in the borough of Queens, one-third in Brooklyn, and one-third in suburban New York counties, mainly Nassau and Suffolk. A few represented private or parochial schools within the city limits.

Due to the lateness of the award in the summer of 1977, the project director used much of the fall to organize the program and recruit participants for it. Formal bi-weekly meetings began in the late fall of 1977 and continued throughout the following two academic semesters.

A proposed three-day summer component was held during late June, 1978 on three separate days. The project ended with a one-day conference in April, 1979.

At the group's first meeting, participants were asked to indicate their familiarity with a checklist of two dozen social science programs and texts, (component parts of several large programs such as ACSP, EIS, SRSS were listed separately) including all of the major developments sponsored by the NSF such as HGSP, SRSS, ACSP, CPE, EIS, etc. Except for the four community leaders in the group, every member indicated that they had taught one or more social science elective in the last year. Yet only 14 out of 41 or about 30% showed awareness of five or more of the programs listed, the other half responding with total unfamiliarity of the curricula listed. Only 13 out of 41 in-service teachers indicated that they had actually used one or more of the programs to be disseminated.

Table I- Winter, 1978

N=41	Awareness Level Expressed	Use Level Expressed	N=41
Reported Awareness of one to four Curricula	27	28	Reported using none of the Curricula
Reported Awareness of five to nine Curricula	12	8	Reported using between one and three curricula
Reported Awareness ten to fifteen Curricula	2	3	Reported using 4 to 6 curricula
Reported Awareness of sixteen or more	0	2	Reported using seven or more curricula

Project staff composed of five educator-social scientist-experienced teacher teams used these data to plan their approach to the participants who, though experienced and bright, showed only slight recognition of the materials to be demonstrated. A pattern was developed by project staff in which a brief description of a project was given during a session accompanied by an extended demonstration using a lesson selected from the curriculum with sufficient time allowed at the end for a good deal of questioning and debate about the intent of the specific lesson and program.

As these sessions developed, it became clear to the Staff and Director that time was too short to do anything but give participants a 'taste' of each project. In addition, question-and-answer periods all seemed to turn to the same fundamental questions about the methods and philosophy of the social sciences. Many teachers and chairpersons wanted to compare the goals of social science with those of history, and much debate was given to the role of facts, concepts, and values in social science instruction.

The three full day meetings in June of 1978 which had originally been planned for more intensive discussion of curricula developed into a workshop on social science methodology using lessons and data from disseminated materials as exemplars. Each social scientist and staff teacher resource person planned a case study in their area as a vehicle for encouraging discussion of scientific method and procedure. Thus the full-day conferences, in addition to consolidating group spirit, focussed on such questions as how can factual-vs-value issues be defined, what are the fundamental ideas of sociology, how can economics help us to understand our world, etc.

By the fall of 1978, both staff and participants understood each other with much greater depth, The teachers and chairpersons showing much more interest in theory and concepts while the resource teachers and academicians paid closer attention to classroom practice. Staff worked together more closely in selecting the examples to be used for illustrative purposes placing greater stress on 'teachability', yet continuing to stress a social scientific outlook. Participants reported greater satisfaction with the June and subsequent fall sessions than they did with the earlier winter and spring sessions. Some of this positive outlook undoubtedly reflects the ability of project staff (2 educators, five social scientists, and five teacher resource persons) to work together in a consistent and understanding way. Part of the growing satisfaction emerged because a theme had been discovered "the goals and methods of social science" in which nearly everyone was interested, even if not in total agreement about its meaning for the social studies.

At the follow-up evaluation conference in April of 1979, participants were again asked to report upon their level of awareness and use of the curricula disseminated over the year-long life of the workshop. (These reports were partially corroborated by two observers who made field reports of a small cross-section of the participants' classrooms over a fifteen month period). In addition, each participant was asked to assess, the program, its instructors, organization, format, content, and impact. A content analysis of 39 free-style replies yielded the following general reactions:

PROGRAM

There was general satisfaction expressed with the program as a whole and support for the 'smorgasbord' approach to social science curricula. Sharp and almost universal criticism was offered about the brevity of each presentation. Very strong interest was exhibited in political science and anthropology materials and ideas. Many wanted much more extensive and intensive experience with each science program and some went so far as to say that they felt unhappy with a greater awareness of what is available for instruction combined with only the briefest overview of methods for implementation in the classroom.

INSTRUCTION

Participants were just about evenly divided in their approval or dissatisfaction with the project staff and their methods. About half were pleased with the general inquiry approach to teaching and learning, expressing less enthusiasm for those instructors and lessons at which lectures were given, the teacher assuming a central, authoritative role. The other half of the participants were relatively cool (though not strongly disapproving) toward those instructors who took an inductive approach and tried to provoke controversy. It is interesting to note that the director and teacher resource personnel were given much greater approval (and leeway) for innovation than colleagues from the social science disciplines who were expected to occupy roles as authorities in their respective fields. It was also generally felt that teacher-resource personnel played 'second-fiddle' to the social science professors while the director served as moderator.

Organization

Strong criticism was mounted of the dissemination program's scheduling and organization, particularly the number and cyclical nature of the meetings. Originally, sessions were rotated between the different disciplines, i.e., anthropology, sociology, economics, psychology, and political science - one after the other for an over-all total of three sessions each. Most participants argued that better continuity would be achieved if the three sessions devoted to each discipline were consecutive with syntheses left to the full-day sessions. Director and staff took this suggestion under serious consideration for future planning.

The second major criticism dealt with the time given to each curriculum displayed and demonstrated in class-meetings. Support was widely expressed for a year-long program that met weekly and/or had a much longer summer component. Approval was given for the idea of meetings during the school year since it was believed that this acted as a direct spur to classroom innovation (which would be less so for a summer project). This desire for more information and experience with social science programs was surprising given the time constraints and complex commitments of most participants. The Project staff was impressed with the seriousness and desire for knowledge on the part of most of the people accepted into the IDSE workshop.

FORMAT

General satisfaction was expressed for the format of the workshop, i.e., the presentation of each session by a team of three instructors; educator, social science academician, and teacher experienced with the curriculum described and demonstrated. Most respondents indicated that the arrangement gave them a chance to inquire about both theory and practice and gave them an unusual opportunity to advance their knowledge of a discipline while comparing classroom techniques and experience with a teacher/chairperson counterpart. Again, dissatisfaction were focused on the brevity of each experience. Especially strong were desires for much longer question-and-answer periods with college faculty and resource teachers.

Content

Very strong interest was expressed during individual sessions in the philosophy and conceptual structure of the social sciences as well as in the curriculum under discussion. During the evaluation conference, comments were positive about nearly all of the curricula and texts studied, i.e., very few were felt to be a waste of time in terms of content and possible use. Some of the materials presented were criticized as seeming too difficult for their intended audience and several participants indicated a need for simpler materials suitable for younger students in grad (7-9) or for students with poor reading abilities.

Among the most positively reviewed materials were those in Anthropology (EHN) and political science (APB) while the economics (EIS) and sociology (SRSS) programs were considered overwhelming (in their totality) though useful in smaller segments or units. Several psychology texts were given high marks (Wertheimer, McConnell) while others were given lesser, though not negative, ratings. Perhaps because of the novelty of most of the curricula to workshop participants, none were given negative assessments nor were any rejected out-of-hand for probable classroom use. Most participants expressed favor for one portion or another of large curriculum packages and indicated a willingness to experiment on a small scale with their own classes. Few promised to adopt complete curriculum packages for any given elective, but preferred an eclectic approach (the project director did not agree with this approach, arguing instead for major adoptions and full scale implementation of programs or texts). Not surprisingly, those units with which participants actively participated during workshop demonstrations were looked upon most favorably. Familiarity breeds comfort and probable classroom adoption!

Impact

Participants were very generous in praising the over-all impact of the workshop on their knowledge of social science materials available for secondary school courses and electives. There was also satisfaction expressed with the growth of communication and shared ideas between participants and project staff. Many agreed that a network

of "activists" in the social studies had been formed that would have long-term strength and lead to inter-and intra-school cooperation between teachers and administrators. Praise was offered for several college instructors who had responded to requests for additional aid and information and pleasure was expressed for the "graciousness" with which the program was managed, especially for the materials and meals offered during the three full-day conferences.

Awareness and usage levels were again assessed. When asked during the evaluation conference to report on levels of use given to projects and units that had been discussed and disseminated, most respondents (35 out of 45) indicated that they had experimented with at least one curriculum (or portion thereof) new to them in their own classrooms. Respondents were asked to list the program that they had put into service during the year or were now aware of that they had been previously unfamiliar with --- and results are shown on the table that follows:

DATA FROM
1979 SPRING EVALUATION CONFERENCE

TABLE II

LEVELS OF AWARENESS AND USE EXPRESSED BY PARTICIPANTS

N = 45*1	Awareness level Expressed	Use Level Expressed	N= 45
Reported awareness of one to four curricula/units of study *2	1	10	Reported using none of the curricula
Reported awareness of five to nine curricula/units	6	23	Reported using betw 1 and 3 curricula
Reported awareness of ten to fifteen curricula/units	32	9	Reported using betw 4 and 6 curricula
Reported awareness of sixteen or more curricula/units	6	3	Reported using 7 or more curricula

*1 Includes four PTA leaders and school board members for whom 'use' did not apply

*2 Curricula on the list included a unit by unit breakdown of several programs thus resulting in a larger number (24) of publications than seemed warranted by the total of projects disseminated.

Clearly self-reports showed much greater awareness of available social science program. However, this finding is relatively unimportant and not surprising-particularly when compared with the report on level of use. A very large proportion, 35 out of 45, stated that they had experimented with one or more curriculum new to them where only 13 had had any previous classroom experience with these programs. Since it was never intended that participants introduce more than a few of the curricula studied as part of the IDSE workshop, the report on level of use was surprisingly positive. For instance, where five teachers had earlier reported using several social science programs, twelve did so at the project's conclusion.

A problem with these data is their derivation from self-reports. It is not certain if programs were, in fact, implemented in classrooms or to what extent. Usage might mean anything from selected individual lessons or units of study to adoption of total packages such as EHN, SRSS, or EIS. To corroborate reports as well as to gather more meaningful data about the project's impact, two observers were trained in field observation techniques and interaction analysis. A small cross-section of ten of the workshop participants were selected for field study and formal observation.

Interaction Analysis data from three visits to each teacher spread over a year yielded a picture of the participants' classrooms that corroborated their unusual nature. By and large, these classrooms exhibited a high degree of student-teacher interaction with student initiation of ideas taking precedence over teacher-directed answers. Workshop teachers and chairpersons tended to ask many questions

at higher cognitive levels and lectured relatively small amounts of time. Classrooms were relatively open to students' ideas and characterized by a considerable quantity of discussion even where subject matter was traditional. These findings confirm the feeling of staff that most of the participants accepted into the IDSE project were well-motivated, experienced, relatively open-minded school personnel to begin with-probably representing a higher than average quality of instructors.

Among the ten teachers/chairpersons visited, observers noted a shift in emphasis toward more social science and greater incorporation of lessons drawn from project disseminated materials (although it was difficult to assess the scope and depth of usage). Eight of the ten instructors observed appeared to be employing a large unit drawn from an IDSE-related social science program or text with one of their classes, usually an older or brighter group (i.e., honors, juniors, or seniors). Observers also made special note of the school and department atmosphere within which the teachers/chairperson worked. They reported that the "warmest" and "most supportive" situations were those in which participants had been part of a teacher-administrator team attending the IDSE project. It was noted that teachers in these situations generally had excellent supplies of books and materials and worked in close concert with their supervisors. Use of social science materials, according to observers, were viewed as curricular upgrading rather than experimentation by the administrators and teachers in the schools that had sent teams to the IDSE project. The two 'singletons' or 'teamless' teachers who were studied as part of the field sample expressed more doubts than 'team' teachers about the materials they had tried out and were reluctant to introduce large units or programs to their classes. Thus, dissemination of information about curriculum appears to have less impact in situations where institutional and peer support is missing, and much greater impact in contexts where there is good communication and shared knowledge between administrators, teachers, and community leaders.